BALLET TODAY

DECEMBER 1950

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(DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER: MONICA MUDIE)

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Sadler's Wells at "Smoke Rise"

1. MR. J. ALDEN TALBOT, HOST TO THE WHOLE COMPANY, WITH MISS NINETTE DE VALOIS (WHO POSED THIS PHOTOGRAPH HERSELF) AND FREDERICK ASHTON

   Photograph by Walter E. Owen

2. RELAXING ROUND THE TABLE ARE ALEXIS RASSINE, JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH (ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR), MRS. HOOKHAM (MARGOT FONTEYN'S MOTHER), MARGOT FONTEYN, PAMELA MAY, LESLIE EDWARDS AND ROBERT IRVING (CONDUCTOR)

   Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

3. THREE BALLERINAS, MARGOT FONTEYN, PAMELA MAY AND VIOLETTA ELVIN, STROLL IN THE GROUNDS

   Photograph by Walter E. Owen

4. WITH THEIR BACKS TO THE LAKE ARE SEEN GILLIAN LYNNE, JANE SHORE, MARY DRAGE, GERD LARSEN AND JEAN GILBERT (COMPANY PIANIST)

   Photograph by Walter E. Owen

5. MARY DRAGE AND JANE SHORE ARE AGAIN SEEN, THIS TIME WITH BRYAN ASHBRIDGE (WHO TOOK SOME OF THESE PHOTOGRAPHS) AND GRETA HAMBY

   Photograph by Franklin White

6. COCKTAIL TIME FINDS GRETA HAMBY, WILLIAM BARRETT, JANE SHORE, PHILIP CHATFIELD AND APRIL OLRICH PERCHED ON A WALL, WITH CHRISTINE DU BOULAY AND PETER CLEGG AT THE TABLE

   Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

7. MICHAEL SOMES LOOKS UP FROM THE SWIMMING PLATFORM. IN THE BACKGROUND NADIA NERINA, FREDERICK ASHTON, HENRY LEGERTON AND RAY POWELL CAN BE SEEN

   Photograph by Walter E. Owen

8. ANATOLE CHUJOY (EDITOR OF "DANCE NEWS") BUSY WITH HIS CAMERA AMONGST A GROUP WHICH INCLUDES PAULA DUNNING, APRIL ORLICH, JULIA FARRON, CHRISTINE DU BOULAY, RICHARD ELLIS

   Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

9. FREDERICK ASHTON TURNS PHOTOGRAPHER WITH DOUGLAS STEUART, ALEXANDER GRANT AND DOROTHEA ZAYMES IN A CANOE AS HIS SUBJECT. GILLIAN LYNNE AND GILBERT VERNON HAVE JOINED THE GROUP ON THE PLATFORM

   Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

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SADLER'S WELLS IN NEW YORK (2)

by FRANKLIN WHITE

THIS is now the half way mark in this New York season; the three classical ballets, *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Giselle*, have been presented and one programme of repertoire ballets. *Don Quixote* and *Dante Sonata* are to come a little later in the season.

What I felt during the first night about *Le Lac des Cygnes* being a more accumulative ballet as regards this particular audience's reaction than *The Sleeping Beauty*, with appreciation building up until a bursting point at the end of the third act *pas de deux*, variations and coda, was, I feel, rather confirmed when we did the latter ballet for the first time a few nights after our opening. Reminiscent of the presentation last year, applause broke out on sight of the set at the rise of the curtain and from then on it all seemed to follow the same successful course as before. Even so, there are two things that appear to me to differ slightly from last time throughout this season. Firstly, there does not seem to be quite so much immediate reaction at a particularly well-liked moment in a dance; rather the audience seem to wait until the end of that particular piece before showing their appreciation; but it may be that I have just got used to that difference from European audiences and I am not noticing it so much as last year. Certainly, there have been occasions during dances when *pirouettes* in any repeated series have received rounds of applause, and at some entrances, for instance Aurora's in the first act of *The Sleeping Beauty*, when the music has been drowned completely from where I have standing and for quite a few moments.

The second thing that I feel is a little different so far in this present season is something that I think is obvious that it should be so. Last year we came over here as a known quantity, but entirely untried by the majority of people who were to see us. As the values of two countries some three thousand miles apart must somewhat differ, it was at that time hard to tell how much and what would be liked. It was no news that it turned out to be a success and that theatre records have gone on being broken over here by our company, right up to this tour's fabulous advance booking so many months ahead. With all this, the audience this time must be a little more prepared for what they were to see. The initial surprise at the first sight of anything that impresses one does give way to appreciating it from the standards that it sets and one then looks more deeply into it. The audience does seem to me this time to be appreciating qualities that they consider high and judging the performances from that point.

Hospitality has this year been more predominantly personal. Less big parties and official receptions for all the company and more with friends. There was no party after the show on the first night as last year, when Mayor O'Dwyer, who has just been appointed American Ambassador to Mexico, supplied such a spectacular police escort to a dinner on the bank of the East River. The former part of that occasion could not be so effectively possible now, for our opening coincided with the start of a new regulation banning the use of police or any other siren, except as an air-raid warning. Back to thinking of those things again and after only a mere six years! But I am getting away from our first night and McCarthy's bar where I spent the remaining few minutes before midnight and quite some time after, watching through the window the reactions of the fair-sized crowd gathered outside the stage door, as various people made their way out. They are somewhat different from those who wait for us in England, autograph hunters seem less predominant and more of them wish to talk to one and ask questions about the company and ballet in general. From my perch, I was delighted to hear the reception that greeted Miss de Valois as, alone, she came out of the theatre. Another awaited Margot Fonteyn when

SIR HAROLD BOULTON, CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE IN NORTH AMERICA OF BRITISH TRAVEL ASSOCIATION, WELCOMED THE PRINCIPALS OF SADLER'S WELLS BALLET AT A RECEPTION ON SEPTEMBER 6TH. HE IS SEEN HERE WITH MARGOT FONTEYN, FREDERICK ASHTON, DAVID WEBSTER, NINETTE DE VALOIS AND MOIRA SHEARER

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

NATHALIE BRANITSKA AGAIN GAVE A PARTY THIS YEAR AND IS HERE SEEN IN AN AFFECTIONATE EMBRACE WITH FREDERIC FRANKLIN. GRANT MOURADOFF, ONE OF AMERICA'S BEST KNOWN TEACHERS, IS BETWEEN RICHARD ELLIS AND FRANKLIN WHITE WITH MARY SKEAPING (BALLET MISTRESS) ON THE RIGHT AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PICK OUT JULIA FARRON, JOHN FIELD, VALERIE TAYLOR, DOUGLAS STUART, DOROTHEA ZAYMES, ANNE HEATON AND FIORELLA KEANE. GEORGE CHAFFEE IS SELECTING SOME EATABLES AT THE BACK

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

e emerged a little later.

One full company party that I think we all looked rward to was the one given as last year midway in e season, when Mr. Alden Talbot entertained the ntire company at his estate in New Jersey. Buses ollected us at what seemed an unearthly hour of the orning and accompanied by Mr. Chujoy and Miss ingham of *Dance News* and Mr. Walter E. Owen hose cameras are as much in evidence among us at nformal occasions over here as G. B. Wilson's in ondon, we set off for the hour's run to Smoke Rise. was to be one of those perfect parties where everyning was perfectly organised by the apparent lack of it. here must always be some well timed planning espeially at a big party—but how perfect as in this case when it is done so that one is completely unaware of t. Everything went well from the beginning, except when I tore much of the only spare film in my camera; even the sun came out for the first time since we had been over here. That first sight of the immense wood urrounding the lake below, from the sun balcony of Mr. Talbot's house, with the church on an island in he centre, was even more lovely than I had remembered. Little time elapsed before most people made heir way to the swimming stage and to the nearby canoes and began a pleasant lazy day, in and out of the water, wandering through slightly autumn tinted woods or taking canoes out to more secluded spots on the far side of the lake where a colony of water turtles were sunning themselves off the stumps of petrified trees sticking out of the shallow water. They look as contented as I felt as the slight breeze drifted my boat close by them, until with a display of their crimson splashed fronts they flopped into the water and scurried in all directiens, some passing beneath me, with their blue backs turning green in the water. It was a comical sight to see every now and then their round flat heads appear out of the water for a moment waiting for this intruder's departure and once more quickly dispersing at the uncertain note of the island church bell, denoting that various members of the company had found their way into the belfry.

In contrast was the mixture of genuine and tourist Chinatown in the downtown part of Manhattan that several of us went visiting later that evening. I found it horribly sordid.

Far too much has happened in New York to attempt to describe it in this letter as anything more than a long list of events, so I think I will concentrate upon just a few things that I think were important. Several of us, Violetta Elvin, Beryl Grey and myself, thanks to the kindness of Miss Hanya Holm, Miss Pearl Primus, Miss Nina Fonaroff and Mr. Louis Horst, have on several occasions been to watch classes of modern dance. Very

MR. A. BITTNER, MANAGER OF LOUIS SHERRY'S REFRESHMENT BAR, SERVES BERYL GREY AT THE PARTY GIVEN FOR THE COMPANY BY THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE

Photograph by Walter E. Owen

interesting they have been too, and I will speak about them at a later date, but now I will finish by telling you of the party given by Arthur Todd for some of the leading members of Sadler's Wells to meet some of the principal artists in American Dance. I had the honour and great privilege of also being present.

The company included the gracious first lady of American Dance, Ruth St. Denis, Hanya Holm, Nina Fonaroff, Agnes de Mille, Helen Tamiris, Valerie Bettis, Janet Collins, Ted Shawn, Charles Weidman, Antony Tudor, Louis Horst, the composer of much of the music for Martha Graham's works and editor of *Dance Observer*. Winthrop Palmer and Alice Bingham of *Dance News* were also there, also Walter Terry of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Lillian Moore, the New York correspondent for *The Dancing Times*. The Sadler's Wells Ballet was represented by Ninette de Valois, Margot Fonteyn, Beryl Grey, Violetta Elvin, Alexis Rassine and myself.

It was one of the most interesting hours that I spent in New York, and I feel that it is a pity it should be inevitable that so many of those assembled should be unable to appreciate each other's work even more by having the opportunity of seeing performances of those of each country. Only Ruth St. Denis was at that time dancing in New York and that on a night when we were also on. In spite of it being the première of *Don Quixote*, Miss de Valois was present for part of Ruth St. Denis's recital and the next day Arthur Todd brought Miss St. Denis to the matinee performance of Moira Shearer's *Giselle*. Seats were hard to get for our performance and only some of those present (at the party) were able to get in. As Mr. Horst suggested, it would have been perfect had it been possible for the American dancers to put on a recital for us and, in return, we give a matinee at which seats would be available for artists and critics only.

(*To be continued*)

MIXED BLESSINGS

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET OFFERS "GISELLE", "DANTE SONATA" AND "DON QUIXOTE" LATE IN ITS NEW YORK SEASON

By ARTHUR TODD

DURING the second and third weeks of its New York season, September 19th through October , the Sadler's Wells Ballet presented two American emières, Ninette de Valois' *Don Quixote* and Frederick hton's *Dante Sonata*. New York audiences were o given an opportunity to compare the Wells' pre- itations of better known works—*Giselle* and *Les Pati- rs*—with other interpretations already familiar to em. In addition, *Checkmate*, *Facade* and *A Wedding uquet* were also brought back for the second ason.

Margot Fonteyn's American debut in *Giselle* took ace before a brilliant capacity audience at the Met. Tuesday evening, September 19th, with *Les Patineurs* the curtain-raiser. Though Fonteyn scored a tre- endous personal ovation at the conclusion of *Giselle*, ere were sharply divided opinions as to the relative erits of the presentation and even to the depiction of e leading role. Nearly everybody's chief criticism was that the whole production was restrained to the point of under-statement and, consequently, the dramatic tempo and the individual interpretations seemed lacking in drive and intensity.

In relation to the surrounding production, Margot Fonteyn gave an eloquent, though not inspired, interpretation of this demanding role. Her mime was portrayed with honesty and conviction and the mad scene at the end of the first act was, by all odds, the peak of her performance. Her second act characterisation did not seem fully realised though she was technically superb. Here one missed the ethereal quality that was so much a part of Markova's portrayal. Michael Somes was more than believable as Albrecht though some of his mimed passages seemed overdrawn. Pamela May as the Queen of the Wilis had mimetic authority but her dancing lacked the brilliance, of say, Mary Ellen Moylan's approach to the role. Leslie Edwards was uniformly excellent as Hilarion.

ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SAME PARTY. HERE ARE MISS DE VALOIS, MR. S. HUROK, MARGOT FONTEYN, HARIJS PLUCIS (MAITRE DE BALLET), LUDOVIC KENNEDY (HUSBAND OF MOIRA SHEARER), REGINALD SOWRY (HOUSE MANAGER OF THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE) AND MOIRA SHEARER

AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE PARTY MISS ALICE BINGHAM OF "DANCE NEWS" AND OUR INDEFATIGABLE PHOTOGRAPHER, MR. WALTER E OWEN, SIT AND CHAT WITH ANNE HEATON, VIOLETTA ELVIN AND JOHN FIELD

Photograph by Bryan Ashbridge

Choreographically, the main difference between the Wells' *Giselle* and others of recent memory is the fact that Sergueeff's *ensemble* sequences seem, at times, uninspired and, at others, uneven. The usual male *ensemble* was missing in the first act and the Wilis' sequences in the second act appeared lacking in unity. On the credit side, however, were the carefully devised and executed mime sequences that added notably to the lucidity of the plot.

After its première, for some reason, *Giselle* took on added depth and meaning and Fonteyn's role seemed enriched by a broader range of colour and contrast. Moira Shearer's Giselle, which outclassed Fonteyn's in the opinion of many, was still another triumph added to the others she scored this season. Dramatically, her interpretation was beautifully moulded and her second act was intensely moving visually and emotionally. Alexis Rassine as Albrecht was uneven—surprisingly good at times and overplayed or carelessly executed at others. Gillian Lynne's Myrtha, however, was a very fine one indeed.

Robert Helpmann made his first appearance of the season as Albrecht in the middle of the last week of the season. He delivered a remarkably fine performance and his mimed sections of the role were just about the best of recent memory. However, he is not now a virtuoso dancer (and, perhaps, never was) and certain sequences suffered as a result. But he is a tremendously resourceful artist and, it must be added, an extremely fine partner.

Frederick Ashton's jaunty and joyous *Les Patineurs*, which shared the bill with *Giselle*, was an unqualified success. William Chappell's costumes and scenery seemed a far happier setting for the skaters than did Cecil Beaton's decor for Ballet Theatre's 1946 presentation of this work. In this British version, one also sensed a mounting in tempo and dramatic interest. Brian Shaw, though he almost knocked himself out in his variation on the first night, made an instantaneous hit and stopped the show at every following presentation of the ballet. One might wish that the lovely Beryl Grey and the very capable John Field had more to do in this ballet. However, the always delightful Nadia Nerina, along with the sparkling Rowena Jackson and Rosemary Lindsay were particularly noteworthy in their roles.

On the other hand, Frederick Ashton's *Dante Sonata* not receive nearly such a warm welcome. Quite urally, nearly everyone felt that it bore a much ser relationship to one of the Massine symphonic lets than it did to the modern dance field. One of chief weaknesses seemed to be that the movement alities of the Children of Darkness and the Children Light were much too similar. Consequently, ough something was always going on, the two groups emed to lack motivation or contrast. Nevertheless, have found that almost any work by Mr. Ashton integrity and there was much that was admirable patterns and floor spacings. By all standards, the ost notable contribution of the evening was Moira earer's performance as one of the Children of rkness.

Ninette de Valois' *Don Quixote* fared even less well, ough it got ten curtain calls at its première. Inentally, the première of *Don Quixote* coincided with e of Ruth St. Denis' rare appearances in New York d it was completely characteristic of Mme. de Valois at she was present, at least for the opening section of e programme, in the distinguished capacity audience at filled Carnegie Hall to pay homage to the beloved Miss Ruth", who has been America's First Lady of ance for the past half century.

(Ruth St. Denis, looking miraculously youthful and diant, gave a performance that included many of her eat creations of the past five decades. Her proamme ranged from the *Incense* of 1906 through *White de*, *Yogi*, *Nautch Dances*, *Tagore Poem*, *Salome* and the senkavalier and Brahms Waltzes to the majestic regorian Chant, composed just last year. Everyone ho has followed Miss St. Denis' pioneering career has rtain favourites in her repertoire. Mine happens to be *Gregorian Chant* because it seems to be one of those incandescent works of genius that lift one's spirit straight out of the confines of the theatre, transcending the usual dance experience. It is no longer news that Ruth St. Denis is one of America's great women as well as being a creative pioneer in the dance world but her enthusiastic audience again reminded her of this in an unforgetable ovation at the conclusion of her programme.)

To get back to Mme. de Valois' *Don Quixote*, it is a work that will never satisfy American audiences though it does have a great deal to recommend it. It is indeed unfortunate that Roberto Gerhard's score is not more helpful. Actually, it seems almost completely at variance with the material and movement that Mme. de Valois chose to condense into a half-hour ballet. Moreover, certain literary purists may feel that the choreographer has not made the wisest selection of incidents to be translated into dance form. Though the over-all effect of this ballet lacks the inherent drama and irony of the Cervantes legend, individual sequences stand up beautifully and one is aware of a great creative and theatrical intelligence at work. Certainly no other choreographer has provided Fonteyn with a role that demonstrates her broad range of interpretation. (What a wonderful Hagar Fonteyn might make in Tudor's *Pillar of Fire*!) Helpmann, in a role built on his specific gifts, was nothing short of superb, and Edward Burra's sets and costumes gave Mme. de Valois the kind of support that she never got from the music. Despite its deficiencies, I would infinitely prefer watching a choreographer blaze new trails in a work like this than be content to compose in a set groove and, I must add, I found *Don Quixote* far and away the most creatively original and exciting

RTHUR TODD GAVE A EA PARTY AT WHICH OME OF THE SADLER'S VELLS DANCERS WERE BLE TO MEET LEADING XPONENTS OF THE ODERN AMERICAN ANCE. HERE IS MISS UTH ST. DENIS SITTING ENEATH HER OWN ORTRAIT AND TALKNG WITH FRFDERICK SHTON AND WALTER ERRY (DANCE CRITIC OF THE "NEW YORK IERALD TRIBUNE")

Photograph by John Brefach

work in the current repertoire.

The three remaining works in the repertoire were well remembered from last season. Ashton's *Facade* and *A Wedding Bouquet* were both delights. However, we've been so saturated with the Charleston on Broadway of late that Mr. Ashton might, perhaps, have spared us further by omitting the Fox Trot in *Facade*. However, no one in the contemporary American ballet field composes ballets as well as Mr. Ashton does in his uniquely high-comedy *mètier*, and both of his comic works fairly sparkled at every performance. Ashton, of course, was supremely amusing in the Gigolo role in *Facade* and Helpmann was at his best in his deadly witty performance of the Groom in *A Wedding Bouquet*.

It has been a wonderful experience to have the Sadler's Wells Ballet back in New York again. Perhaps the finest compliment that one can pay the company is to repeat the remark that Ruth St. Denis made as the curtain descended on Moira Shearer's *Giselle*:—"The Sadler's Wells Ballet is the flower of British civilisation".

At this writing, the Sadler's Wells Ballet is having a triumph in Los Angeles after a series of gigantic successes on the way west. In New York we are faced with a diet of Parisian theatre dance, now that Roland Petit's Les Ballets de Paris are here. Following this, we face the prospect of a full month of the de Cuevas conglomeration of stars which will be playing in opposition to the New York City Ballet Company. More on all these next month.

Photograph by Robert G. Tompkins

HERE IS ARTHUR TODD WITH BERYL GREY, VIOLETTA ELVIN AND FRANKLIN WHITE OUTSIDE THE ST. MORITZ HOTEL, NEW YORK

RAM GOPAL AT THE ADELPHI

By FRANK JACKSON

TWO ordinary ratepayers following behind me out of the Adelphi Theatre on the first night (October 16th) of Ram Gopal's short London season were clearly overwhelmed by the experience of seeing Indian dancing for the first time.

That particular thrill has, alas, gone for me, though I still remember it well. Its place has been taken by a remarkable sense of tranquillity and security in a neurotic world; for here is a living tradition, which has survived the alarms and excursions of centuries. And the feeling of familiarity I get from Indian dancing, now that the strangeness has worn off, is understandable since, however exotic these dance styles may seem to us, they have a far more direct relationship with the everyday life of the people than our own so-called classical ballet. Garish coloured pictures of the adventures of Lord Krishoa are to be found in the humblest of Indian homes, but I have yet to hear an English mother, of whatever social category, threaten a naughty child with a visitation from von Rothbart, or compare a good child with "that nice Princess Aurora"!

Ram Gopal himself was in fine form. His dancing has, as it were, been purged of all inessentials and now has a classic beauty which unites such opposing qualities as delicacy and strength, humanity and objectivity. He had as chief partner the young and enchanting Kumudini, who looks not unlike the Margot Fonteyn of Sadler's Wells days. In a Kathak dance in the first half of the programme she displayed outstanding strength, precision and attack, while, in a Manipuri dance portraying an invocation to the sun, she had an equally outstanding lyrical sweetness—a rare combination indeed of qualities in a dancer.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Dedicated to Sadler's Wells

I AM in rather an odd place this month but I thought you would all like to see the Sadler's Wells feature first of all. Once more my thanks are due to the assiduous Walter E. Owen who made this special number possible. This time he has been aided and abetted by two members of the company, Bryan Ashbridge and Franklin White who also wield formidable cameras. Sadler's Wells' tour across America and Canada is again in the nature of a royal progress and we are all proud to know that they have repeated their last year's success which is so much more difficult than making an impression the first time.

From all the reports received it is plain that Margot Fonteyn has fully lived up to her previous triumph, that Beryl Grey has again been warmly admired both as dancer and personality, and that this year Moira Shearer has found her top form and had the success which was not quite hers in 1949. Indeed her Giselle was more wholeheartedly praised by the critics than was Fonteyn's, though possibly Fonteyn's performance suffered a little by being considered as part of the whole production which in many respects was found wanting. By the time it was Shearer's turn the critics knew what to expect from the presentation and concentrated on the name role. In view of Miss de Valois's expressed preference for American critics as against English, it will be interesting to see whether she will re-consider certain details which have long needed over-hauling.

Not all triumphs

Neither *Don Quixote* nor *Dante Sonata* was received with much favour—the only surprise here being that anyone thought they might be—but *Les Patineurs* joined *Facade* and *A Wedding Bouquet* to complete Ashton's hat trick of major successes. After what was apparently a slightly wobbly first appearance, Brian Shaw made a great hit as the Blue Skater and everyone picked out the dazzling Rowena Jackson both in this ballet and as the Blue Bird. She may well be going to follow Mary Honer as one of the very rare English virtuoso dancers.

It is quite plain, on the showing of two New York seasons, that, unless the American critics entirely fail to mirror general opinion, English ballets do not impress to anything like the same extent as the English dancers as an *ensemble* and the English productions of the two Russian classics, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Without these two ballets the story would have been very different for it is perfectly certain that Fonteyn, Grey, Shearer and the half dozen or so other dancers who won critical approval would never have been able to score their individual triumphs in an all-English repertoire.

It Had to Happen

While Sadler's Wells were in Hollywood the management received a telephone call from the secretary of one of the high-ups of 20th Century-Fox asking if tickets could be arranged for him. On enquiry as to which ballet he would like to see, back came the answer, " The Red Shoes " !

Walter E. Owen — Prize-winner

Readers will be delighted to know that our favourite American photographer has recently won two important awards in the nation-wide competition organised by the American magazine, *Popular Photography*.

Festival Ballet

A full review of the Stoll Theatre season, with photographs, will appear in the next issue, but it is already plain that the crowning achievement so far is Anton Dolin's reproduction of *Giselle*—the finest production of this ballet of our time. Hugh Stevenson has co-operated with two magnificent sets which are in the true romantic tradition. His second act is not less than superb and so is the lighting for it. Here at last, we feel, is definitive *Giselle* with all the small details which are so often omitted from the many other productions we have seen. Here is a village which is not completely man-less except for Hilarion: here Giselle is acclaimed Queen of the Harvest. Wilfred is Albrecht's faithful companion so, of course, it is a huntsman who leads the Duke of Courland to Giselle's cottage. Giselle's mother is a healthy forty (actually she did not look old enough—always the difficulty with a very young company—but the intention was there) and she knows her place too well to egg her daughter on to finger the Princess's gown. Instead she is dismayed when Giselle cannot resist the rich material. Giselle stabs herself so there is no necessity to give

earlier indications of heart trouble to account for her death. So one could go on. It all adds up to magic; and crowning it all are the performances of Markova and Dolin within the setting which Dolin has prepared with such loving care and knowledge. They more than confirmed their reputations as the Giselle and Albrecht of their generation.

What is so noticeable about these two performers is that they, above all other dancers of the day, understand the difference between acting and mime. This must always be an arguable matter in Ballet but, to me, mime implies that the feeling of the dance is continuous, that there are no obvious breaks between dance and expressive movement. Several New York critics seemed to feel that the Sadler's Wells *Giselle* omitted a good deal of the dancing—they complained that it seemed more pantomime (in the original sense) than ballet. This is not really so; it is simply that when our dancers begin to "act" they usually cease to dance so that the whole feeling of continuity is lost.

None of the other ballets come anywhere this *Giselle*, and some of them, which may be all very well for suburban cinemas, really will not do for the West End of London. Except for the half-dozen principals the dancers are still very raw, and the music on the whole was execrably played. However, that in so short a time Festival Ballet could mount such a production is something of which it may be deeply proud and for which all ballet lovers should be (and, I hope, are) most profoundly grateful. P.W.M.

PALTENGHI AND THE RAMBERT BALLET

by MARY CLARKE

WHAT is the first essential for a new choreographer to grasp? What quality stamps the genuine creative artist and distinguishes him from the mere arranger of dance steps? Is there any sure way of spotting a winner through an immature work? These questions went with me to Hammersmith to see the Rambert Ballet in David Paltenghi's first ballets and remained unanswered. After seeing *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *Prismatic Variations* I was completely undecided as to whether Madame Rambert's genius for making others create had triumphed again—or not.

Neither ballet was wholly bad and yet neither was really pleasing. All the way through I was restive with objections as to the way Paltenghi had handled his subject and yet the very fact that one's brain worked so actively was an encouraging portent. This is not to say that Paltenghi has launched into something startling and unorthodox (like Ross's *Caprichos*, for example) for both his ballets are strictly conventional. He works in terms of genuine dance movement and with a competence that one would expect in view of the dances he has produced for both plays and films. The most difficult question he now has to answer is whether he is capable of rising above this competence (which is itself not over-common in the dance theatre) and creating something uniquely individual. At the moment his tastes seem fairly eclectic, for his first two ballets are in the completely different styles of romantic drama and pure classical dancing. It is therefore possible that he may work through a whole variety of other people's styles and eventually arrive at one of his own, for all artists develop differently and very few kick off, like Robbins, with a *Fancy Free*. So for the present we can do no more than give Mr. Paltenghi the benefit of the doubt and our good wishes and state briefly what he has actually accomplished.

The Eve of St. Agnes is based on Keats's poem of the same name, the sixth stanza being quoted as a programme note. The characters are named as in the poem and the action is more or less paralleled. This being so one naturally looks for something of the effect Keats achieved and, theoretically, the story should be fairly well suited to the stage. Unfortunately, however, all the richness, the colour, and the contrasts which Keats achieved so vividly have been ignored. Roger Furse's revolving and functional set is drably coloured and his costumes are frankly insipid. Because there is no blaze of warmth and colour in the scenes of revelry there is no contrast with the icy outdoors or with the virginal quiet of Madeline's bedroom. There is also scant attempt to give the young dancers choreography to help them look like

"... barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords"

and here again the costumes are most unsuitable for they should disguise, not reveal, immature limbs. The two very old people in the story, the Beadsman and the Beldame, are given movements of too great speed and vigour while the Baron and his Wife are so vaguely delineated that I haven't identified them yet. Madeline herself is the most vivid character and Paltenghi has suggested something of her romantic absorbtion while the bedroom *pas de deux* has real delicacy and beauty. This passage and the flight past

Photograph by Gilbert Adams

DAVID PALTENGHI AND MARGARET HILL IN "THE EVE OF ST. AGNES"

the drunken revellers are the ballet's best moments, primarily because Margaret Hill and Paltenghi are capable of giving them real expression. The ballet's other weaknesses spring partly from an initial overestimation of the capabilities and resources of the young company.

A similar error of judgment prevented *Prismatic Variations* from making the effect it might have done. The idea was wonderful—the seven colours of the rainbow generated by Light—and as an excuse for a suite of dance variations it could hardly be bettered. But it depends utterly on the pure dance creation of the choreographer and the pure classical dancing of the company, and neither of these were strong enough, in this instance, to sustain the ballet. Vivienne Kernot's costumes, if not particularly remarkable, were adequate but her spiky decor was not. The music used (not very sensitively) was Beethoven's Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli in a rather odd orchestration by Geoffrey Corbett.

The present light weight and immature quality of most of the Rambert dancers was highlighted by the performances of *Antonia* for which Paula Hinton and Walter Gore rejoined the company as guest artists. In its present shape this ballet is both adult and moving and it has a terrific theatrical impact. With three experienced artists to lead them, the company performed admirably, and both Paula Hinton and Walter Gore gave performances of really remarkable concentration and intensity. Miss Hinton, in particular, stands out in this ballet as that great rarity—an English dancer of passion and abandon; as a dramatic ballerina she is in the same class as Kaye and Jeanmaire and it is high time that she was suitably recognised and cherished.

BALLET ON TELEVISION

By LISA GORDON SMITH

NOW that the Weather has regularised its union with Winter by formally taking its name we can expect a larger quota of teleballet than in the days when the same Weather (obviously "no better than it should be") was brazenly flaunting itself under the name of Summer.

Whether the Television Planners laboured under the delusion that it would be too hot to dance I know not, though I, for one, cheerfully would have wobbled on one toe for the edification of all comers in exchange for a spell under those arc-lamps any time from June to September. Possibly they thought all the balletomanes would be out in the wide, open spaces basking in the long, sunny evenings. I don't know; I only know we had very little ballet in our chilly drawing-rooms!

In the middle of September the situation showed a slight *relevé*, for on the 18th Christian Simpson produced (presumably out of someone else's hat) a semi-professional company entitled "British Dance Theatre". This company is popular in its native Manchester, I am told, and it is an axiom in theatre that what Manchester thinks today, London thinks tomorrow. For this Londoner, the tomorrow has yet to dawn.

Apart from a drunken little *pas de deux* of the type of dancing known to V.A.F. as "eccentric" and which had real merit, both as characterisation and as entertainment, the choreography had the repetitive and narcotic quality of a clockwork pendulum. Christian Simpson, whose "camera choreography" (to quote his own phrase) has so often left me dizzy and irritated, on this occasion saved me from a state of coma by supplying with his cameras the pattern of movement

which the dancers appeared to consider unnecessary. Mr. Simpson's "pictures" ranged from the adequate to the beautiful and he made a good job of the production.

A purely personal technical hitch prevented my seeing Clothilde and Alexandre Sakharoff on September 21st, much to my disappointment, for I should very much have liked to find out why two dancers needed four—or, indeed, any!—electronic organs as their accompaniment. I am credibly informed, by the way, that these instruments include in their range notes too high in pitch to be audible to the human ear. It would be fascinating to know what suffering from practising neighbours prompted some public benefactor to invent a musical instrument capable of being played silently!

On October 2nd the first programme of the second edition of *Ballet for Beginners* was produced by Philip Bate. This delightful series, begun in a spirit of experiment last year, proved so popular that we are to have it all over again, with improvements; this time on a regular monthly basis to enable us unfailingly to present ourselves at our screens on the first Monday evening every month up to and including March, 1951. Also, on the Wednesday afternoon following each programme, a "live" but shortened version is to be presented in the television Children's Hour.

KUMUDINI, RAM GOPAL'S WONDERFUL NEW PARTNER WHO HAS BEEN APPEARING WITH HIM RECENTLY AT THE ADELPHI THEATRE, LONDON

The first of this season's programmes was, as on the previous occasion, devoted to the technique of the feet and legs, and was as fascinating as was the very first *Ballet for Beginners* programme on July 4th last year.

Felicity Gray, script writer for these productions since their inception, has been "discovered" by Philip Bate in a new field of talent, as a commentator of charm and clarity.

At last we have concrete evidence that the Powers That Be at Alexandra Palace recognise the importance of teleballet, for they have put under contract the healthy nucleus of a resident ballet company, headed by Dominie Callaghan and Michel de Lutry, which will do much to ensure the continuity of future programmes.

Too late for review in this issue are two more October productions of note. On the 18th the Continental Ballet, produced by Philip Bate, will give a programme of which the *pièce de résistance* will be Molly Lake's new ballet *The Fall from Grace*. As an indication of the nature of this ballet perhaps it is only necessary at this stage to say that, according to the programme notes, the slip-up indicated in the title takes place during a family picnic "in a fairy glade near Wapping Old Stairs".

On the 25th Leonard Boucher's first teleballet *Barrack Square*, a ballet set in a play of which the script, choreography and decor are all Mr. Boucher's own work, will be produced by Christian Simpson.

Later attractions are, I understand, to include, at some as yet unspecified date in November, the production of Falla's Spanish ballet *El Amor Brujo* (*Love, the Magician*) starring Consuelo Carmona and Angelo Andes.

Bouquet of the Month

This month there is a double bouquet to be shared between Anita Landa and Keith Beckett for their crisp, swift, wonderfully precise Vivandière and Drummer Boy in the Prologue to *Nutcracker* as produced by Nicholas Beriosoff for Festival Ballet. This number sparkles out of its rather tedious setting of boring grown-ups and tiresome children and has the audience sitting bolt upright with surprise and pleasure.

PRESENTS MAKE THE HEART GROW FONDER

By GENEVIEVE GOODMAYES

THE Christmas season being, unhappily, a time for glad and gracious giving, a few notes on the subject of gifts for balletoloons will not come amiss. So many are content to present each other, year in and year out, with such commonplace gifts—signed portraits, cakes iced with a dancer's name, tea-cosies in the shape of a ballerina's head, pyjamas tastefully embroidered with scenes from *Giselle*—when with a little time and trouble they could produce some really personal mementoes which would prove peculiarly satisfying to the recipient. The gift, for example, that is simplicity itself, yet delightfully "different", is one of Mr. ——'s eyelashes: mounted on a tie-pin, or set in a ring, it would prove a surprise and a lasting delight. On first reflection the eyelash may seem a little difficult to procure; but since according to the most reliable sources every human being sheds a complete set every thirteen days, it is simply a question of following the gentleman until he drops one: nothing to dissuade an eager and experienced balletoloon. Be sure to wash off any lingering traces of theatrical eyeblack with a really good soapless shampoo before mounting; a little brilliantine will restore the gloss.

Equally engaging, for the ballerina-bedazzled, would be a lock of the favourite's hair, varnished, to be worn as a brooch, placed in a locket, or put to even more delicitous use by being glued to a portrait (preferably coloured). Choose the time of the actual severance very carefully: say after a performance of *Le Lac des Cygnes* when she is sure to be really tired, and when there is a good thick crowd of autograph hunters to keep her busy. Do it very, very gently—practice on your friends will help you to gain the necessary dexterity—and it will not be noticed at all. With regard to choice of tool, nail scissors are recommended as being easily carried and speedily concealed; do see, however, that they are not even slightly rusted: a line must be drawn between legitimate and admirable enthusiasm and indelicacy of conduct.

Another unusual and lovely suggestion is the footprint of a ballerina, suitably varnished and framed. To obtain, place a piece of good quality blotting paper (white or pastel shades are best) beneath the feet of the dancer concerned on a damp but not, definitely not, muddy evening. Be sure to add a few explanatory lines beneath the imprint before varnishing: this will obviate the risk of the precious exhibit being acclaimed and discussed—even sold—as a mere work of art. For a really worthwhile present, the kind that from an immediate delight becomes a valued heirloom, make a collection of criticisms in praise of a ballerina from contemporary magazines. Paste carefully on to sheets of vellum, blocking out as artistically as possible all references to decor, music, and all that sort of thing, and bind into an album.

For the balletoloon who is also an animal lover, a kitten stroked by Fonteyn would be sure of a rapturous reception. This idea of providing a truly personal touch is capable of many variations and extensions and will accommodate most hobbies and interests; but please preserve a sense of measure. It would, no doubt, be very convenient, but too suggestive of vulgar film-fan adulation, to expect a ballerina to stroke a dozen kittens, two cricket bats and a fretwork saw, all on the one night.

I think that by now I will have said enough to stimulate the brains—in default of brains, reflexes—of most balletoloons. As, however, a food gift is always welcome in these days, I am including a recipe for the traditional celebration dish, Blanquette of Slipper, modified to permit of its being divided amongst several friends. It is quite simple.

First steal your slipper. Age and condition are immaterial; indeed some enthusiasts aver that a well-used shoe has an altogether more appealing taste, and certainly it provides a much richer gravy. Fillet, remove drawstring, and weigh carefully; cover with cold water and leave overnight. (If the shoe is pink, avoid an unappetising bleached look by adding a little cochineal.) Place in casserole and simmer gently, allowing an hour per half-ounce. There are those who assert that the addition of two chickens and a ham improves the dish: but to my mind this spoils the elusive flavour—something between truffles and fresh newsprint—which one simply cannot obtain from anything else. When tender, pour into previously heated jars and seal at once. The smallest portion of this delicacy is sure of a place of honour on any balletoloon's Christmas dinner table. Though when cold it will slice successfully, it should properly be served *fouetté*.

I earnestly recommend all balletoloons to consider these notes; they have been written in no trifling spirit, and will, I trust, be found of value in even the most difficult cases.

AUSTRALIA'S EXCITING NEW BALLET

By CECIL SLOCOMBE

THE new Australian work *Corroboree* which received immediate acclaim after its world première at the Empire Theatre, Sydney, recently will interest balletomanes all over the world.

The inspiration for the ballet came from the dances and rites performed at ritual tribal gatherings or corroborees of the Australian aborigines. In conception, execution, background and performance *Corroboree* is therefore one of the few truly and wholly Australian works of art of importance yet evolved for the theatre. The result is more than encouraging: it is sensational.

Before the personalities make their bow, let the curtain rise first on the ballet itself. To understand the ballet, it is necessary to have some idea of the ceremonial on which it is based.

Australia's real-life corroborees vary a good deal according to the region in which the different tribes of aborigines live. The corroboree is not staged merely for passing amusement, but usually as a sacred rite. It is also a means of handing down knowledge of all kinds from one generation to another.

The corroboree may take the form of ceremonial to ensure the increase of a totemic species, or the re-enactment of the myth enshrining the deeds and travels of a native hero. Or it may centre on the mourning song for a dead brother, with a didjeridoo and tapping sticks accompanying the solitary singer.

The didjeridoo of the Australian aborigine is one of the world's most primitive musical instruments. Usually it is just a hollow piece of wood—perhaps a branch eaten out by white ants—played after the style of a trumpet.

At corroborees in Central Australia a group of men sing a totemic song, and others may join them. A different practice applies in Arnhem Land, to the north. There the hereditary songmen sings the songs handed down to him by his father. He alone has the right to sing: others dance.

In transferring aboriginal dances to the stage, *Corroboree* has followed the spirit rather than the letter. Too slavish an imitation would be impracticable as well as tiresome. So the ballet gives a fairly typical summary, a composite picture representative of corroborees generally.

The ballet is divided into seven sections or movements. The first is the "Welcome Ceremony". In this the Witchetty Grub and Emu Men call on the Medicine Man to summon all tribes together to start the corroboree. The didjeridoo is heard.

In the second movement the Thippa Thippa and

JOHN ANTILL, THE COMPOSER, WITH CHOREOGRAPHER REX REID AND THREE OF THE DANCERS DURING A REHEARSAL

Photograph by W. Brindle

THE RAIN DANCE IN "CORROBOREE". THIS PHOTOGRAPH GIVES SOME IDEA OF THE STRIKING SETTING BY WILLIAM CONSTABLE

Photograph by W. Brindle

Bell Bird people dance to the evening star. Fish men assist the Frog totem to do the rain dance in the bird. This is a serious ceremony ending in a subtly-humorous anti-climax. The sky darkens, thunder sounds, lightning flashes. But, as so often happens in the arid inland of Australia, only two drops of rain fall. Four notes on the vibraphone represent the falling raindrops.

Next, the Snake totem demonstrates the Spirit of the Wind. During the following, the fifth, movement the Kangaroo Men pay homage to the rising sun. The morning star dance by the Hakea Flower makes up the sixth section.

Finally there is a procession of totems and the closing Fire Ceremony, in which representatives of the Lace Lizard, Cockatoo, Honey Ant, Wild Cat and Small Fly take part.

The finale is well described by one critic: ". . . . the whole astonishing work ended in a stirring and barbaric climax that must be unique in the annals of contemporary ballet".

Wild dancing and spectacular tableaux occupy the entire stage. Blazing torches sway crazily. Fiery fragments and smoke permeate the air. The sinister note of the bull roarer is heard. As the curtain falls, the dancers collapse in chaos.

Personal triumph for the presentation of *Corroboree* goes to fortysix-year-old John Antill, composer of the ballet suite of that name. In the last few years his composition has attracted attention musically in Britain, Europe and the United States of America, but theatregoers outside Australia had (at this writing) yet to see it on the stage.

Antill was born in Sydney, New South Wales, and began his study of music with piano lessons when he was five. Despite the music that was in his soul, he began work in life as a draughtsman in the local railways department, confining his cultural ambitions mainly to the writing of operas in his spare time. When it became clear that he could safely embark on music as a career, he entered the Sydney Conservatorium, where by working round the clock he showed that he had at last that kind of genius which is made up of an infinite capacity for taking pains. He specialised in playing the violin and clarinet, for which he was awarded scholarships. To gain experience, he toured with several opera companies, acting variously as conductor, chorus master and also as a clarinetist in the orchestra. Antill nowadays holds the important posts of music supervisor for New South Wales and music editor for Australia with the Australian Broadcasting Commission. His compositions include film music and incidental music to stage plays.

For Antill, *Corroboree* is the culmination of fifteen years of hopes and ambitions. In 1935 he wrote the detailed outline of a fortyfive-minute Australian ballet. He finished the score in 1943, but not until 1946 did he hear it played. Eugene Goossens, then visiting

Australia as a guest conductor for the A.B.C., gave it a try-out at a Sydney Town Hall concert. Goossens was enthusiastic. He described *Corroboree* as a most stimulating and original work. "The outstanding ballet music of Australia, the finale the most exciting passages I know in contemporary music," were his words. Two months later, back in London, Goossens gave *Corroboree* its London orchestral première at the Albert Hall. The London *Times* critic noted "new and original effects of instrumentation from an orchestra rich in ceremonial dance".

Encouraged, Antill took his illustrated preface to the ballet to London on a mission seeking production. However, despite the keen interest the work evoked, it remained for the National Ballet attached to the National Theatre Movement of Australia to be the first to do *Corroboree*.

Rex Reid, the choreographer, is Adelaide (South Australia) born, and aged twenty-seven. He trained and danced in London, and danced in most parts of Europe before returning to Australia in 1949.

Working out the patterns for *Corroboree*, Reid stuck closely to Antill's musical plan for the ballet. He also did some research, and viewed scientific films on the aborigines. Reid says: "The music is the best thing that has come out of Australia. And the ballet has turned out to be real 'theatre'."

Decor is by the prominent Australian scenic artist William Constable. Features are a pinkish red hill, rising to a backdrop of hard blue Central Australian sky, against which shows a few typical stunted blue-grey trees denuded of leaves. The lighting is dim, heightening the eeriness of the music.

Robin Lovejoy, young Australian costume designer, did a good job turning out fortyseven costumes, thirty-two head-dresses and thirty totem poles for the thirty dancers.

For the première, Antill himself conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra which has done so much to make his ballet suite recognised. The score is an exacting one, calling for a full symphony orchestra where possible.

Much of the credit for the immediate success of *Corroboree* in Sydney must go to the polished performance by the National Ballet Company attached to the National Theatre Movement of Australia, which is subsidised by the Victorian Government.

Corroboree offers scope for little solo work; instead, it demands team work and physical effort of an exhausting nature. The hardest role of all is that of the Medicine Man, who is on stage for the full fortyfive minutes. This part was taken ably in the initial season by John Manuel, an Adelaide dancer and at the time only twentyone years of age.

In the strict sense *Corroboree* is written for all-male dancers. The National Ballet had only eleven males in its complement. The other nineteen parts had therefore to be danced by girls. But, costumed and masked like men, their appearance detracted not at all from the artistic effect.

Corroboree's première was unanimously praised by the critics. Typical was the comment of the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "*Corroboree* . . . bearing the unmistakable stamp of genius, electrified a packed house. . . Never before has native resourcefulness in the field of ballet achieved such an immediate and emphatic success nor made such a dynamic impact upon a first-night audience."

If and when *Corroboree* is presented in London and New York, one may safely predict that the impact will be equally as forceful.

Meanwhile, interest in the ballet suite is being aroused in far places. A set of orchestral parts is being sent to Idaho (U.S.A.) for inclusion in a symphony programme. More important still, after the Sydney season of *Corroboree*, Columbia arranged for Eugene Goossens and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to record the ballet suite for general release which means Antill's great work will soon be heard by music lovers everywhere.

Dancers of Tomorrow

TRAINING for ballet does not begin before the age of eight or nine. Before that time, a child has neither the strength, the application nor the understanding; and no one can foresee before thirteen or so whether the extremely talented child is really going to have the qualities which make a ballet dancer.

Many small children, however, have a strong sense of rhythm almost before they can walk and this can be developed from an early age and will be a very real help to a teacher later on. "Babies classes" are an enchantment as solemn mites respond to music in obedience to their teachers' suggestions — and often without any promptings. On the opposite page you will see Del, earnestly engaged in "being a tree", and she and Sarah in the other sketches are "saying goodbye".

The action photograph by Frank Sharman on the cover shows Moira Shearer in "The Sleeping Beauty", Act I. Moira Shearer's success in this and in "Giselle" have been features of the American tour of Sadler's Wells Ballet

Balletomane's Bookshelf

g to the Ballet. By Arnold Haskell (Phoenix House, 7/6).

his is one of the Phoenix House "Excursions" es for Young People and a better introduction to et for youthful newcomers could not be imagined. Haskell takes his young readers on an informative age through all the details that go to the making of let, how a ballet is composed, how dancers are ned, the different types of dancers and of ballets—act, there is very little of relevance which he has rlooked in the space of 120 pages or so. The otographs are aptly chosen to illustrate the various nts. Mr. Haskell's strength, it seems to me, is that does not attempt to influence his readers' tastes by ng didactic about his own; he does not, as so many tics do, confuse matters of personal opinion with tters of fact. His readers are left free to form ir own tastes, but with him as a guide they are not ely to go far wrong. This is just about the best ristmas present any young balletgoer could possibly given.

s de Deux: The Art of Partnering. By Anton Dolin (A. & C. Black, 8/6).

The American edition was reviewed earlier in the ar. It has been slightly revised and clarified for this glish edition and there is only one word for it—thralling. No, there is another one—invaluable. The amount of wisdom, knowledge and instruction packed into so comparatively small a space is astonishing. This book is a "must" for every girl and boy now in the classroom but dancers of every experience will also find it full of helpful advice; while the ballet-goer will find that it recreates memories of two great dancers almost as vivid as their actual performances. There is a hint in the first chapter that Dolin intends to follow this book with one on the aspects of partnering in modern ballet. We will all hope that he will find time to do this ere long, and perhaps it will then be possible to see that the illustrative sketches (not the photographs) are more attractive than those used in the present book.

Sketching the Ballet. By Francis Marshall (The Studio Ltd., 3/- nett).

This is one of the *How to Draw* Series and a very charming one. Whether it will really help the novice to learn how to draw dancers, the most difficult of all figures to capture, I should not care to say, but Mr. Marshall explains informally how *he* taught himself to do so and shows the results in various stages from the merest outlines to fairly detailed drawings. Like all sketches of the ballet they are hit or miss and vary from the extremely good to the mediocre while some of the incidental information about the ballets is incorrect, but the book as a production is a worthwhile three-shillingsworth.

P.W.M.

THE NEW PRODUCTION OF "SWAN LAKE" AT LENINGRAD AS PRODUCED BY KONSTANTIN SERGEYEV

THE SEASON OF 1949-50 IN RUSSIA

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

THE palm of the season goes this year to Leningrad for two very important events—to the Maly (Little) Opera Theatre for the new Soviet ballet *Yunost* and to the Kirov Theatre for the excellent revival of *Swan Lake* done by Konstantin Sergeyev with thorough historical authenticity and respect to the legacy of Petipa-Ivanov. The harmony of this new production is enhanced by the beautiful sets executed by artist S. Virsaladze, who has a deep feeling for ballet. Konstantin Sergeyev, himself perhaps the best Siegfried on this stage, the Kirov Theatre, choreographed some beautiful *ensembles* for the Swan in the last act, making the movements and the whole atmosphere purposely different, more pathetic, more agitated in comparison with those of the first swan scene in the beginning of the ballet. The apotheosis is not quite after the original production. It was thought at first to stage a flood, as Tchaikovsky had conceived, but Leningrad Ballet had a grand flood in *The Bronze Horseman* and it was decided by the artistic management that two floods were really uncalled for. In the apotheosis Odette is saved through the strength of Siegfried's love, and the beautiful maidens, who have now cast away the spell which made them into swans, surround the reunited couple.

What a contrast to this classical ballet is the Stalin prize winner of this year *Yunost* (*Youth*), choreographed by the talented young choreographer Boris Fenster for the sister theatre of Opera and Ballet, known as the Maly Operny and founded in 1918 in what was the exclusive French comedy theatre for court circles (The Mikhailovsky).

It is difficult to put into words the definite charm which is conveyed by this ballet. The secret of the success is embedded, no doubt, in the excellent "book" by Yuri Slonimsky. He succeeded in creating growing and developing characters in the persons of the three principal heroes—Dima, Petia and Dasha—who, out of children engaged in various pranks, grow into people of a high purpose and idea. Perhaps too much of it is done in pantomime—but is it very important which medium was used, since the result was so successful? Moreover, I said pantomime, and not mime. Pantomime has plenty of action. There is, though, a whole act done in classical idiom. It is a picnic arranged by boys and girls on a clearing in the woods. Personally I think that, particularly in a comtemporary

llet, the task of the choreographer is to invent tirely new unconventional movements, while enjoying the advantage of working with dancers perfectly veloped by the classical school. However, Fenster s some interesting choreographic "finds" in this llet, some of them suggested by Slonimsky's "book". here is no doubt that the effect of the production is eatly enhanced by the excellent cast he worked with. he role of Dasha was actually created for Galina ayeva—a unique *travesti* dancer who is particularly ood as a tomboy.

It is very difficult to describe, again, what constitutes the success of Isayeva, particularly since she is in class by herself. Small, a little plumpish, she possesses a first-class technique, and can do any amount of *urs* in a circle at terrific speed. But her asset lies, doubt, in her great comic talent. She is a born tress of a very extraordinary type. In the present epertoire of the Maly Operny she appears in *The Magic eil* and *The False Bridegroom* in entirely different roles. Moscow first became acquainted with Isayeva during he visit of the Leningrad Ballet in 1940, when she ppeared in *Balda*, but she became really known and oved by the audience during the last summer tour of he Maly Operny which appeared for a whole month t the Affiliated Bolshoi Theatre. There were five allets in the repertoire—*Yunost*, *The False Bridegroom* fter Goldoni, *The Magic Veil*, *The Tale of the Dead rincess*, also based on a Russian fairy tale, with music dapted from Liadov's works, and, quite an event of he season, *Schéhérazade*, which was shown just once. ike the *Schéhérazade* produced at the Nemirovitch-Danchenko and Stanislavsky Theatre, this one has nohing in common with the 1909 Fokine-Diaghilev version. The Fokine *Schéhérazade* was never shown on the Russian stage. While Rimsky-Korsakov's relatives were very displeased with the idea of Diaghilev's choreographic adaptation of what the composer had conceived as a symphonic work to a definite programme, they were unable to prevent its production as a ballet in Paris. But in St. Petersburg they banned any attempt to produce *Schéhérazade* as a ballet, and Fokine staged for the Mariinsky *Islamey*, which was really the story of *Schéhérazade*, done in 1912 to the music of Balakirev, orchestrated by Liapunov. Karsavina danced the main part, which was later transferred to Vera Fokine and Olga Fedorova.

The new *Schéhérazade*, also by Boris Fenster, is from a story in *The Arabian Nights* about Fariz and Fetna. The latter is captured and brought to a Shah's seraglio but is rescued by Fariz whom she loves. The oriental brightness of the ballet is accentuated by the riot of colour in the costumes designed by S. Virsaladze, who obviously studied Persian miniatures and hails from the Caucasus himself. The *raison d'être* of the existence of this ballet is another excellent and unique dancer. She

GALINA ULANOVA IN THE REVIVAL OF "THE RED POPPY"

is Nina Mirimanova, who took Moscow by storm when she appeared in the part of the Oriental street dancer in *The False Bridegroom*. She is an excellent character dancer and seems to possess no bones, so pliable is her body, which she commands almost like an Indian dancer. She dances beautifully in *Schéhérazade* but was not provided by the choreographer with too many chances, and that is the drawback of the entire production. There seems to be a lot of movement but very little dancing. This is, however, a personal and exacting criticism since the ballet had great success with the audience including the diplomatic corps which appeared almost *in toto*.

The Leningrad visit was organised because the company of the Bolshoi Theatre finished the season very early—on May 5th, after which date the Bolshoi was closed for capital repairs and renovations in preparation for the 175th anniversary to be celebrated in the Spring of 1951.

The early closing of the season enabled many Opera and Ballet theatres in big centres of the Soviet Union to see guest dancers such as Semeyonova and Lepeshinskaya. Galina Ulanova danced, as usual, in her native Leningrad which always eagerly awaits her return. She appeared there in *Romeo and Juliet* for the first time since the 1940 Leningrad production. Her new role of the past season was that of Tao-Hoa, the Chinese dancer, in the revived *The Red Poppy*. This was a part very different from anything Ulanova had done, and yet possessing many qualities inherent to her. People who have been to China told me she had succeeded in capturing the main features of Chinese woman. Olga Lepeshinskaya impersonated another, entirely different image of Tao-Hoa, giving many interesting facets to the part first created by the great dancer and mime Ekaterina Geltser in 1927.

The Red Poppy as a ballet still remains a clash between classical form and new content, though the Lavrovsky revival has considerably improved it as a spectacle and added many excellent mass scenes, bringing the ballet to a much sharper point. Still it was an attempt to pour new wine into old containers and the success was in no way complete, though the ballet is very popular with the audience. The best of the original Tikhomiroff dances are preserved by Lavrovsky, including the famous Ribbon dance, Dance of Golden Acrobat, Tao-Hoa's dances with long nails attached to her fingers and The Dance of the Two Fans, and these are invariably enthusiastically received, while the "*Yablochko*" or Sailors' dance which formed the glory of *The Red Poppy* in 1927, when it was choreographed for Tikhomiroff's production by Lashchilin, scores an ovation, particularly in the new version by Lavrovsky.

The part of Ma-Lie-Chen, the young revolutionary coolie, introduced into the new version of *The Red Poppy* both in Moscow and Leningrad, is danced with true masculine force and beauty both by Gabovitch and Kondratov, while the old part of the villain, Lie-Chang-Foo, is brought to new heights by Yermolayev or Koren, who are both so excellent it is difficult to give preference to either of them.

The annual performance of the Moscow school brought forth a new budding star. He is Peter Andrianov—a nineteen year old graduate, a dancer of extraordinary personal charm and abilities. While his jump is really not at all high, he creates the impression of great elevation because he performs every movement without any effort whatsoever and is endowed by that rare gift of seemingly halting for a fraction of a second in the air. He is so young it is difficult to predict his scope of roles as yet. He is lyrical in type and there is no doubt that some day he will be an excellent Albrecht in *Giselle*. For the graduation performance he appeared in *La Fille Mal Gardée*, which is a part requiring grace and youth, but no particular acting. Yet it was unanimously pronounced that Moscow has not seen such a performance of *La Fille Mal Gardée*. What was most important, people not particularly well versed in ballet immediately picked him and spoke of his extraordinary qualities, noticing his grace and that halt in the air. May we hope that Andrianov grows into a dancer of first magnitude. He is so painstaking, modest and hard working, there is every chance to believe this wish will come true. He will appear next season in ballets at the Bolshoi Theatre, starting with *La Fille Mal Gardée*. At the Students' International Festival in Prague last summer he was awarded the title of Laureate.

For lack of space it is impossible to give a full picture of the ballet in other parts of the country. Vakhtang Chabukiani produced a new national ballet *Gorda* at Tiflis, dancing the title role of an ancient Georgian hero. The ballet had an excellent press and was praised for Chabukiani's ability to convey the meaning through dance and gesture and for his own virtuoso performance. His pupil, Vera Zignadze, is his worthy partner in this ballet, danced by a group of Chabukiani's talented pupils. As usual, Chabukiani blended national movements with classical technique in his own inimitable way.

Many Opera and Ballet Theatres received much-need talented new choreographers this year, in the persons of the first graduates of the Choreographers' Faculty at the Theatre Institute of Moscow. The graduation "thesis" for each of the students was a production of a ballet at one of the provincial Opera Houses. Tamara Ramonova produced *Laurencia* at Saratov, Alla Azimova did *The Red Poppy* for Stalinbad, Turkmenia, Anna Kobzeva choreographed *Happy Shores* at Lvov, M. Satunovsky is preparing *The Sleeping Beauty* at Kharkov, and many other young graduates joined the family of Soviet choreographers.

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